



ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME GUITARIST JAMES WILLIAMSON UNITES WITH FRANK MEYER AND PETRA HADEN AS ‘THE PINK HEARTS’

**NEW ALBUM *BEHIND THE SHADE* IS WILLIAMSON’S MOST MUSICALLY EXPANSIVE PROJECT
TO DATE, RUNNING THE GAMUT FROM INCENDIARY RAVE-UPS TO POIGNANT BALLADRY**

**Certain to win support at Modern Rock and AAA Radio formats,
Behind the Shade will be released on LP+CD, standalone CD, and digitally
by Leopard Lady Records on Friday, June 22, 2018**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE / March 21, 2018 — A 2010 inductee into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame as a member of The Stooges, James Williamson is now set to make his most stylistically diverse musical statement to date with his new group, James Williamson & the Pink Hearts. Fronted by Los Angeles-based vocalists Frank Meyer (The Streetwalkin’ Cheetahs) and Petra Haden (That Dog, The Haden Triplets), the Pink Hearts’ repertoire encompasses everything from feral rockers to soul-searching balladry. *Behind the Shade* by James Williamson & the Pink Hearts will be released on LP+CD, standalone CD, and digitally by Leopard Lady Records on Friday, June 22, 2018.

Recorded last year in Berkeley (instrumentation) and Los Angeles (vocals), *Behind the Shade* is a thoroughly modern rock album which also evokes the most stirring elements of Seventies rock ‘n’ roll. “You Send Me Down” is an exuberant party starter with keyboards funky enough to have been lifted from the Billy Preston songbook, while “Pink Hearts Across the Sky” (a sure-fire favorite at AAA Radio) is resilient Americana with a crystal clear vocal performance by Haden worthy of Linda Ronstadt. The lonely, late-night afterglow of Alejandro Escovedo’s “Died a Little Today” (the album’s sole cover and a CD-only bonus track) features a plaintive vocal by Haden accompanied by swooning lap steel. “Destiny Now” pairs melodic rock guitar with vocals reminiscent of ‘90s college rock favorites Madder Rose and Bettie Seveert. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Meyer’s raw, rabble-raising vocals throw kerosene on the riff-driven assault of “Riot on the Strip” and “The Revolution Stomp.” Meyer also has room to get

contemplative on the buzzing underground strut of “Miss Misery” and the tough-as-nails rocker “Judith Christ.” “This Garden Lies” is another standout as Meyer’s passionate tale of love gone wrong is propelled by violin, sax, and a blazing Spanish trumpet.

Meyer, a consistently impressive songwriting force on the album, penned all of the lyrics and co-shares the lead vocals. Haden’s violin graces five tracks and her voice appears throughout the album, either singing lead, on duets with Meyer, or providing harmonies. Williamson supplies all of the riffs, guitar parts, and most bass parts. In addition, *Behind the Shade* features a wide array of talented accompanists. Michael Urbano (Smash Mouth, Bourgeois Tagg, Todd Rundgren, John Hiatt) provides inventive percussion and driving drum patterns. Gregg Foreman, Hervé Salters, Paul Roessler, Nick Hart, and Audrey Vera guest on keyboards and piano. Additional musicians on the sessions are Jason Carmer (bass), Don Rooke (lap steel), Geoff Yeaton (saxophone), Tony Peebles (saxophone), and Steffen Kuehn (trumpets).

The origins of the Pink Hearts stretch back to 2012 when Williamson was searching for backing singers to appear on what would become the final Stooges album, *Ready to Die* (2013). Latter-day Stooges bassist Mike Watt suggested his friend Petra Haden to Williamson. “Petra came in with her violin and blew me away with her playing and singing,” recalls Williamson. “Months later when we recorded the basic tracks, I included her on what would become *Ready to Die*’s closing track, ‘The Departed’.”

By that point, Haden — the daughter of jazz bassist Charlie Haden, and sister of bassist-singer Josh Haden of Spain — was already a music veteran. In 1994, she was a founding member of That Dog, a rock quartet signed to Geffen Records that included one of her triplet sisters, bassist Rachel Haden, in its core lineup, as well as guest appearances by the remaining triplet, cellist Tanya Haden. Petra, Rachel and Tanya have also recorded and performed as The Haden Triplets. Throughout her career, Haden has recorded a string of acclaimed solo albums and has collaborated with Bill Frisell, The Decemberists, Tito & Tarantula, The Twilight Singers, Beck, Luscious Jackson, Foo Fighters, Green Day, Victoria Williams, Sunn O))), and many others.

The Pink Hearts’ main vocalist and lyricist Frank Meyer took a more circuitous route in joining the band. Williamson picks up the story: “The last full-length album I released was *Re-Licked* (2014); it was a proper recording of songs Iggy and I had demoed for the follow up to *Raw Power*. The album featured 14 different vocalists so it was pretty impossible to tour, although I did appear on *Last Call with Carson Daly* alongside several singers who appeared on the album. When I eventually booked a handful of West Coast concerts to support the album, I was lacking a male vocalist for “I’m Sick of You” so I asked my friend Cheetah Chrome (The Dead Boys) for suggestions. He recommended Frank Meyer, singer/guitarist with The Streetwalkin’ Cheetahs, which happened to be Cheetah’s touring band at the time. Frank killed it on the live show. I was very impressed by his singing and stage presence.”

Fast forward to 2017. In the years since *Re-Licked*, Williamson had recorded various collaborative singles with a range of artists, and an EP, *Acoustic K.O.*, with fellow high-energy Michigan rocker Deniz Tek of Radio Birdman fame. He was considering the idea of embarking

on a new album but was stuck for a lyricist with whom to work. Remembering the strong impression Meyer had made, Williamson reached out to him. “Once I approached Frank to collaborate, I instantly knew he was right for the project as he not only said ‘Yeah,’ he said ‘Hell Yeah!’, recalls Williamson. “Frank is very quick in writing lyrics. As quickly as I could turn out riffs and tunes, he would turn them around with fully developed lyrics. It was kind of amazing, really.”

For his part, Meyer was thrilled at the idea of collaborating with Williamson and Haden. “The idea of being able to sing with Petra was very exciting and a little intimidating, as she is an absolute master vocally,” Meyer recalls. “But after the first batch of songs, she and I clicked and things got real comfortable. After that, James said I should start writing some songs with her in mind as lead vocalist. It really opened up the whole process because now I knew we could do anything or go anywhere creatively. A lot of people who are familiar with James’ work with The Stooges are going to want to hear a rough-and-tumble male vocalist, but people that want to hear how James is growing as a songwriter and musician will be interested in this new twist. By teaming us up he got the best of both worlds.”

Haden concurs: “I loved working with James and Frank. They’re both wonderful guys and such great musicians. It was so cool to be in the studio and witness their creative process. The magic definitely comes through on this record.”

James Williamson is best known for co-writing with Iggy Pop, and playing all the guitars on, 1973’s seminal *Raw Power* album by Iggy & the Stooges. That album’s lead track, “Search and Destroy,” has become a rite of passage for any self-respecting rocker and has been covered by Pearl Jam with Mudhoney, Def Leppard, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Sid Vicious, The Dead Boys, and countless others. Commenting on *Raw Power*’s ferocity, James has said “I was a very emotional guitar player, so I always played that way. That’s how we felt, so that was what it sounded like.”

Dropped by CBS Records, The Stooges disbanded in February, 1974, although Williamson continued to work with Pop, off and on, throughout the 1970s. This period yielded the demo collection *Kill City* (1977), the infamous live album *Metallic K.O.* (1977), and produced a pair of Pop solo albums, *New Values* (1979) and *Soldier* (1980, pre-production). After a long break during which Williamson lived in Silicon Valley and worked as a technological developer, he reunited with Pop, in a version of the *Raw Power* lineup of The Stooges, in 2009. Following several tours which played on multiple continents, The Stooges released a final studio album, *Ready to Die* (2013), produced and co-written by Williamson. Although The Stooges played their final live dates in September 2013, it wasn’t until June of 2016 that Williamson released an official statement on behalf of the band saying that The Stooges were no more.

***Behind the Shade* by James Williamson & the Pink Hearts**
Produced by James Williamson

Studios:

Basic tracks and most solos recorded at "Shabby Road Studios" / Outland Studios, Berkeley, CA;
Vocals and some overdubs recorded at Kitten Robot Studios, Los Angeles, CA
Recorded: 2017

Engineers: Jason Carmer, Nicholas Francis Stein, Paul Roessler, Joe Cardamone, Bruce Duff
Mixed by Jason Carmer
Mastered by George Horn

All songs written by Frank Meyer & James Williamson
Except "Destiny Now" by Paul Nelson Kimball & James Williamson
And "Died a Little Today" by Alejandro Escovedo

Tracklist:

1. Riot on the Strip
2. Judith Christ
3. Pink Hearts Across the Sky
4. You Send Me Down
5. Destiny Now
6. This Garden Lies
7. Purple Moon
8. Miss Misery
9. The Revolution Stomp
10. Behind the Shade

CD Bonus Track:

11. Died a Little Today

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